

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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SUBJECT: ROKG REAPPOINTMENT OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

REF: SEOUL 0882 (DTG 060733Z FEB 76,) SEOUL 1475

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1. SUMMARY: SCREENING AND REAPPOINTMENT OF FACULTY MEMBERS REQUIRED BY JULY 1975 LAW HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES. 212 FACULTY MEMBERS RESIGNED OR WERE NOT OFFERED CONTRACTS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS. PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES WILL SOON COMPLETE TASK AND IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT 150 PROFESSORS WILL NOT RECEIVE CONTRACTS. TOTAL NATIONWIDE WILL APPROXIMATE 360 OUT OF TOTAL OF 10,000 FACULTY MEMBERS. PROFESSORS DROPPED FOR WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED POLITICAL REASONS WILL PROBABLY NUMBER NO MORE THAN TEN AND IN MOST CASES THESE FIRINGS REPRESENT FORMALIZATION OF EARLIER SUSPENSIONS. END SUMMARY

2. SCREENING AND REAPPOINTMENT OF SOME 10,000 FACULTY MEMBERS IN 98 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES REQUIRED UNDER LAW PASSED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN JULY 1975 HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN CASE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND
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IS ONGOING IN CASE PRIVATE ONES. ON FEBRUARY 28 WHEN

PRESIDENT PARK APPROVED LIST OF REAPPOINTEES, IT WAS REVEALED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION THAT OUT OF A TOTAL OF 4,260 PUBLIC UNIVERSITY FACULTY, 212 TEACHERS HAD EITHER RESIGNED VOLUNTARILY OR WERE NOT OFFERED CONTRACTS. MINED ANNOUNCED THAT 91 OF 212 HAD RESIGNED VOLUNTARILY. VAST MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO RESIGNED DID SO BECAUSE OF INCOMPETENCE OR BECAUSE THEY HAD OTHER JOBS.

3. PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS, NUMBER OF WHICH ALREADY HAVE CONTRACT SYSTEMS, HAVE ENCOUNTERED DELAYS IN COMPLETING THEIR LISTS WITH FINAL DECISIONS NOW DUE IN NEAR FUTURE. ALTHOUGH EXACT NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS TO BE DROPPED IS NOT KNOWN AT THIS TIME, PRESS HAS ESTIMATED NUMBER AT ABOUT 150. IF THIS PROVES TRUE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACADEMICIANS NOT REAPPOINTED WOULD APPROXIMATE MODEST 3 PERCENT OF NATIONWIDE TOTAL OF 10,000 PLUS FACULTY MEMBERS. THIS IS SOMEWHAT LARGER THAN EARLIER EMBASSY ESTIMATE BUT NOT FAR OUT OF LINE.

4. CONCERN EXPRESSED BY SOME ACADEMICIANS TO EMBOFFS THAT FACULTY REVIEW REQUIREMENT WOULD LEAD TO PURGE OF LARGE NUMBER OF TEACHERS FOR POLITICAL REASONS HAS NOT BEEN BORNE OUT. ALTHOUGH MINED HAS REFUSED TO RELEASE NAMES OF FACULTY MEMBERS NOT OFFERED CONTRACTS AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES HAVE NOT PUBLISHED LISTS, EXTENSIVE EMBASSY INVESTIGATION REVEALS THAT NUMBER OF FACULTY MEMBERS NOT OFFERED CONTRACTS FOR REASONS THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED POLITICAL WILL BE VERY LIMITED. THUS FAR, WE HAVE ACTUALLY IDENTIFIED BY NAME SEVEN SUCH PROFESSORS. OF THIS NUMBER, TWO ARE FROM SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (ONE IS STUDYING IN THE US), TWO FROM KOREA UNIVERSITY (BOTH PREVIOUSLY SUSPENDED FROM THEIR POSITIONS FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES), ONE HISTORY PROFESSOR FROM KYUNG HEE UNIVERSITY, A PROFESSOR FROM YONSEI UNIVERSITY, AND AN ART PROFESSOR FROM EHWA WHO RESIGNED THIS JANUARY DUE ALLEGATION HE HELPED STUDENTS DISTRIBUTE KIM CHI-HA STATEMENT. YONSEI BOARD MEMBER TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT THERE HAVE BEEN THREE POLITICAL FIRINGS FROM YONSEI WITH THREE OTHER FIRINGS HAVING POSSIBLE POLITICAL OVERTONES AND THREE HAVING NO POLITICAL MOTIVATION.

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5. ALTHOUGH DOMESTIC POLITICAL FACTORS APPEAR TO HAVE PLAYED MINOR ROLE IN FACULTY SCREENING, INTRA-UNIVERSITY POLITICS, PARTICULARLY IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES, HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN DETERMINING WHO WILL BE OFFERED CONTRACTS WITH UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIONS USING OCCASION TO DROP FACULTY MEMBERS WHO HAVE OPPOSED THEM. PROFESSOR AT SUNG KYUN KWAN UNIVERSITY TOLD EMBOFF THAT FIVE OF 12 PROFESSORS DROPPED FROM FACULTY ROLLS WERE NOT OFFERED CONTRACTS BECAUSE THEY HAD

ENGAGED IN FIGHT WITH UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER AUTONOMY AND OTHER BENEFITS. SIMILARLY, AT KYUNG HEE UNIVERSITY TWO PROFESSORS WERE ASKED TO RESIGN BECAUSE THEY HAD QUARRELED WITH PRESIDENT. PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT SOME OF THESE WOULD FILE SUITS AGAINST UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES DEMANDING WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR DISMISSAL. HOWEVER, MINED ANNOUNCED MARCH 2, THAT TEACHERS WHO WERE NOT APPOINTED COULD NOT REQUEST A RE-EXAMINATION OF THEIR CASE IN ORDER TO SEEK REAPPOINTMENT BUT LEFT THE DECISION AS TO WHETHER THEY COULD BE EMPLOYED AT OTHER SCHOOLS UP TO THE HEADS OF THE RESPECTIVE INSTITUTIONS.

6. IN SUM, FACULTY REVIEW AND UNIVERSAL SHIFT TO CONTRACT SYSTEM APPEAR TO HAVE STUCK LARGELY TO ROKG'S STATED PURPOSE OF IMPROVING QUALITY OF FACULTY IN KOREA'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES BY WEEDING OUT INCOMPETENT AND UNDESIRABLE FACULTY MEMBERS, PLUS THOSE WHO HELD OTHER JOBS.
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